

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 30 June 1578 from Edward Fitton (1550-1606) to Lord Burghley concerning Oxford's manor of North Rode in Cheshire, at the time part of Oxford's wife Anne's jointure. For another letter from Edward Fitton to Lord Burghley dated 3 July 1578 touching on this matter, see CP 10/4.

From the entry for Sir Edward Fitton (1548/9-1606) in the online edition of *The Dictionary of National Biography*:

*Fitton, Sir Edward (1548/9–1606), administrator, was the son and heir of Sir Edward Fitton (1527–1579) of Gawsworth, Cheshire, and his wife Anne Warburton (1527–1574) of Arley, Cheshire. Born into one of the most prominent gentry families in Cheshire, he was the eldest surviving son in a family of nine sons and six daughters. He was educated at Brasenose College, Oxford, graduating BA on 6 April 1566, and he subsequently studied at Gray's Inn. He married Alice (d. 1626), daughter and sole heir of Sir John Holcroft of Holcroft, Lancashire; they had two sons, Edward and Richard, and two daughters, Anne [see Newdigate, Anne] and Mary. Their eldest son and heir, Edward, was born on 3 December 1572. Their younger daughter, Mary Fitton, baptized in 1578, became a maid of honour to Queen Elizabeth in 1595.*

*During the 1570s Fitton was an active participant in his father's administrative career as vice-treasurer and treasurer-at-wars in Ireland and was occasionally employed to transport money into Ireland. From his Gawsworth home he kept in contact with Lord Burghley concerning Irish affairs. On his father's death in July 1579 it was reported that Fitton, then aged thirty, expected to inherit the office and he was adamant 'that none shall mixe with my father's reckoning but my self' (TNA: PRO, SP 63/67, no. 55). He was appointed receiver-general for Ireland in that year in succession to Edward Waterhouse. On 11 October 1579 he was knighted at Dublin Castle by the newly appointed lord justice, Sir William Pelham, and on the following day was issued with a passport to return to England with his company and his goods. His father's accounts were still a subject of debate in the Dublin administration well into the 1580s.*

*Under the terms of his father's will Sir Edward inherited his father's entire estate on condition that he pay any outstanding debts, support his sisters until they married, and provide dowries for them when their marriages were arranged, and provide for the education of two of his younger brothers, William and Francis. Besides the principal family estate at Gawsworth he also inherited his father's interest in the manors of Aldford, Echeles, and Alderley in Cheshire; he entered on his Gawsworth lands on 25 April 1583.*

From the entry for Sir Edward Fitton's daughter, Mary, in the online edition of *The Dictionary of National Biography*:

*[by 1600 Sir Edward Fitton's daughter, Mary] had become the mistress of William Herbert (1580–1630), also styled Lord Herbert, eldest son of Henry Herbert, second earl of Pembroke. When she was revealed to be pregnant the following January, the queen's*

*wrath fell on the maids' chamber as a whole, and Mary was committed to the care of Lady Hawkins. By 5 February 1601 her lover, now third earl of Pembroke, had confessed his responsibility, but Cecil reported that 'he utterly renounceth all marriage' (Brewer and Bullen, 4.20) and predicted that they would both go to the Tower. In March Pembroke was sent to the Fleet prison, where he remained for some weeks, while Mary gave birth to a son, who died soon afterwards.*

Right honourable, my bounden duty remembered. Forsomuch as I think myself in conscience bounden to my very good Lord the Earl of Oxon', whose tenant I hope to be, and presently exercise the stewardship of his tenants inhabiting in North Rode within this county of Chester by his Lordship's sufferance, and do acknowledge myself bounden to your Lordship above all in duty, and so will remain to all yours, and therefore I, thinking the same lordship to appertain to my Lady of Oxon' by way of jointure or dower, am the willinger to do anything that is or can be in my power to further anything that may purchase quietness to her Ladyship's living, presently I am therefore to require as well your Honour to direct me what to do in a cause lately happened, as also to understand my Lord of Oxon' his pleasure for that it toucheth his Lordship's inheritance, to wit, a great portion of land lying waste which hath ever been reputed my Lord's as appertaining to his lordship of North Rode called by the name of Rode Heath, and his tenants have enjoyed the use of the same, as well by pasturing of their cattle as by digging turfs and peats for their fuel, but now by some sinister information given to two gentleman, Mr Randall Mainwaring and Randall Brereton, esquires, they make title to most part of the same heath as parcel of their manor of Eaton, and if I had not been, and this bearer, who got turfs in my Lord's right, I fear they would have taken away the turfs gotten by my Lord's tenants, but by my persuasion in respect of their friendship and kindred to me and the duty they bear to both your Honours, they are desirous to have the matter ended without law by friends or sight of evidences upon both parties, if it shall so please my Lord of Oxon, or as shall seem good to your Honour.

And for that purpose have I sent up this bearer, John Passe, whose true dealing and honesty towards my Lord, and willingness to bestow his travel and life to do my Lord his master service, deserveth in my conceit a remembrance of his faithfulness. He liveth upon a mean farm of a mark rent by year.

Thus resting at your Lordship's commandment in this and in all other things above all men, my father excepted, I humbly take my lease. Aldford the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 1578.

Your Honour's to command during life,

E. Fitton.

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Endorsed: (1) To the right honourable my singular good Lord, the Lord Burghley, Lord High Treasurer of England, (2) 30 Iunii 1578, Mr Fitton to my Lord, claim laid to parcel of the manor of North Rode, being of the Earl of Oxford's possessions.